

## THE LORD WILL DO WHAT IS GOOD

2 Samuel 10:1-19 (Key verse 16)

*“Be strong, and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight.”*

In today's passage we are going to learn about the power of having faith in God. We are going to witness the Israel armies' victory against the Ammonites and their bought Arameans mercenaries. The Israelites could be victorious because they had faith that the Lord will do what is good in his sight. The Ammonites on the other hand were overcome by doubts and suspicion, and in fear of the power of God they fled the battle scene. We are therefore going to learn about the dangers of doubt and suspicion, and how we can overcome them when we have faith that God will do what is good in his sight. We are also going to learn what it means that God will do what is good in his sight. May God have mercy on us all to receive one word from today's passage.

The passage today begins with David continuing to show God's kindness to others, he did this by sending a delegation to Hanun the new king of the Ammonites, to show sympathy for the loss of his father Nahash. In **verse 2** it says: *“David thought, ‘I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.’”* Nahash was a very terrible king, once upon a time during Saul's early days as the king of Israel he besieged the people of Jabesh Gilead and threatened to gouge out the right eye of every one of them when they wanted to make treaty with him. On the other hand, while David was on the run from Saul in the wilderness the very same king showed kindness to David. Because of this kindness, David sent a delegation to Hanun to show him God's kindness.

How did Hanun respond to this kindness from David? In **verse 3-4** it says: *“the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun their lord, ‘Do you think David is honoring your father by sending envoys to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you only to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?’”* So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away.” The Ammonite commanders were suspicious of David's intentions, they were filled with doubt and so they planted the very same doubt and suspicion on Hanun the new king of the Ammonites. David was sincere, he wanted to bless and show God's kindness to Hanun, but because of doubt and suspicion, Hanun did not accept and be blessed by this kindness. But rather, Hanun went on and did something very terrible, he humiliated David's envoys, seizing them, shaving off half of each man's beard and cutting off their garments at the buttocks and sending them away. Because of doubt and suspicion, Hanun humiliated David's men, he humiliated David who had nothing but good intentions to bless him. When we make decisions based on doubt and suspicion, we put ourselves in danger of doing something terrible, we put ourselves in danger of humiliating others and breaking relationships that are a blessing to our lives.

What then happened when David's envoys were sent away? In **verse 5** it says: *“When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, ‘Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back.’”* When David's men were humiliated by Hanun, it made sense for David to retaliate and teach this young king a lesson, but instead David did not respond at all to Hanun's cruelty, he did not even send a warning to Hanun. Instead David was concerned about taking care of his men, his concern was preserving the dignity of his men and covering their shame, and so he had them stay at Jericho until their beard was grown. David could have wondered and thought many things about what Hanun had done, he could have been suspicious that perhaps Hanun wants to start a war and based on that retaliate. However, David did not allow himself to make decisions based on suspicion, but rather he focused on the mission that God gave him, to shepherd his people Israel and cover their shame.

Even though David did not respond to the cruelty of Hanun's actions, in **verse 6** it says: *“When the Ammonites realized that they had become obnoxious to David, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maakah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.”* The Ammonites realised that they had offended David, at this point they could send men to David to apologise for the wrong and humiliation they caused towards David and his men. This would have been the right thing to do. However, once again the Ammonites were moved by suspicion and doubt, they were filled with doubt that perhaps David will not be unforgiving and will attack them. Instead of coming to David with a sincere apology, the Ammonites went on and spent so much money to hire Aramean soldiers. Once again, their suspicion led them to doing something terrible, they started

a war between Israel and their nation. Before, the Ammonites lived in peace and David wanted to bless them with God's kindness, but because of doubt and suspicion they rejected God's kindness.

And now when David heard about the Ammonites acquisitions and plans, he sent Joab and the entire army of Israel's fighting men to protect the people of Israel. When the Israel armies arrived, the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance of their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maakah were by themselves in the open country. The Ammonites and the Arameans strategy indeed seemed very strong, they had the numbers, they probably had great weapons and had setup a favourable environment to close in on the Israelites when they arrived on the battlefield. But when Israel's fighting men arrived on the battlefield they saw through the Ammonites strategy, of having battle lines in front and behind them. And so Joab selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites. Joab said, *"If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you."*

When the Israelites were faced by a challenging and unknown circumstance, they worked together, they did not allow doubt to overcome them. In fact hearing about the Ammonites who hired great armies, could have intimidated the Israelites, and filled them with doubt about coming to fight the Ammonites and their hired soldiers. However for the Israelites this was not the case, without a doubt David sent his men to the battlefield, and his men willingly accepted the mission their king gave them without any doubt or suspicion. When the men arrived and saw the great armies, they still maintained their attitude and focused on the mission their king gave them. How could the Israel fighting men have such an attitude? Was it because they were great warriors? Was it because of their great experiences in defeating the great armies such as the Philistines? The Israel men could have this attitude because of their relationship with God. Joab revealed this through his encouragement of his men in **verse 12** saying: *"Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight."* The Israelites could be strong and brave and not be overcome with doubt and suspicion because they had faith in God and saw the battle as God's and not theirs. Joab said, *"Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God"* Unlike the Arameans armies who fought for money and for selfish reasons, the Israelites fought for the people of God, they fought for the cities of God. The Israelites fought for a much greater purpose; hence they could be strong and brave, and not be overcome by doubt and the power of suspicion.

Furthermore, Joab encouraged Israel's fighting men saying: *"The Lord will do what is good in his sight"* Israel's fighting men could be strong and brave because of their faith that God will do what is good. Even though they might have been limited or coming short, they believed that because the battle is God's, then he will do what is good in his sight. Because of this, the Israelites did not live with doubts, they were not moved by suspicion but rather they were moved by God who is in control of all things and is always able to do what is good in his sight. In this world there are a lot of intimidating things, for example as gospel workers we might be filled with suspicion or doubt that students will not respond positively to us when we preach the gospel to them. Because of this we might be discouraged to share the word of God with them. However, this attitude is no different from that of the Ammonites, as gospel workers we need to have the attitude of the armies of Israel, we need to have faith that God will do what is good in his sight. When we have this attitude, we will be brave and strong, we will be used greatly by God and participate in his salvation work for the world. (Amen)

And indeed when the Israelite armies had faith in God, they could be victorious. In **verse 13-14** it says: *"Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. /When the Ammonites realized that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem."* Both the Arameans and Ammonites fled the battlefield, and the Israelites won the battle. Even though the Ammonites and Arameans had great strategy, the numbers, and perhaps even great weapons, they could not go ahead with the battle because of doubt and suspicion and most importantly because of the power of God. The Ammonites and the Arameans were overcome by doubt and suspicion because they lacked the power of God in their hearts. The Israelites on the other hand had great faith in God, that he will do what is good, and so even with limited resources they could stand strong and with bravery took on the Ammonites and Arameans who fled from them.

When the Arameans, saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped. In **verse 16** it says: *“Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the Euphrates River; they went to Helam, with Shobak the commander of Hadadezer’s army leading them.”* Even with this great armies, the Arameans still lost the battle, they fled from the battle and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. David also struck down Shobak the commander of their army, and he died on the scene. David could be victorious in this battle because of his faith that God will do what is good in his sight, he had faith that the battle belongs to God the creator of the heavens and the earth. And so, God worked in David’s life, and he could defeat the Arameans armies who were moved by doubt and suspicion.

### Conclusion

When I joined the Wits UBF ministry Sh. Jacob and Shds Rebekah always encouraged me to do everything for the glory of God and to trust God in all things. Their encouragement challenged my old ways of thinking, before I thought everything is about me and that I am responsible for my success and failures. When I focused on God, God could help me to be victorious in things I never imagined I could do. For example, God could help me and the brothers to go out to campus preaching the gospel even though I was spiritually young. I believe we could do this because deep down we believed God will do what is good in his sight, and hence we were not intimidated, suspicious or filled with doubt, but by faith we went to campus and shared God’s word with campus students.

In this world there are many intimidating things, there are many things that can fill us with doubt and suspicion, making us weak and helpless, leading us to terrible mistakes. In fact that is how Satan destroys many lives today, creating conflicts and hatred just from suspicion and doubt, as we saw from the Ammonites. But glory to God, for today’s passage revealing to us that when we have faith that God will do what is good in his sight, we can be strong and brave, and not be overcome by suspicion and doubt. I pray that we can all repent from self-centeredness and focus on God, acknowledge that he is in control. I pray that we may live our lives for God’s glory, so that we can be filled with strength and bravery on daily basis.

Amen. / Key Verse.